



UN Alliance of Civilizations FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME Fall 2013 Edition

European & North American Fellows



This Fellowship is a Programme of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations is made possible by a grant of grant of the Federal Foreign office of Germany and the Hermes Foundation in partnership with the British Council, the League of Arab States, The Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the Qatar Committee for the Alliance of civilizations and the Institute of International Education (IIE)



Aaron Morrison (USA) is a native of California's San Francisco-Bay Area and an award-winning New York City-based multimedia journalist, who uses words, video, audio, photography and social media to tell captivating stories across all platforms. As the *Miami Herald's* correspondent at the United Nations, he covers Latin America, the Caribbean and other issues impacting the Western Hemisphere. Aaron continually strives to expand his scope of knowledge and the number of countries he covers from the U.N. In the summer of 2013, he dove head first into coverage of the U.N. response to the Syrian crisis and other matters in the Middle East. A fellowship at the U.N.'s high-level conference on AIDS exposed him to international reporting. As an active member of the National Association of Black Journalists, the world's largest organization for professional journalists, Aaron actively promotes inclusion and opportunities for young, aspiring and early-career journalists in global and political reporting. Prior to the U.N. beat, Aaron was the politics editor for Loop21.com. He has worked with several U.S.-based news outlets, including The Associated Press and Gannett Company newspapers.



Aktina Stathaki (USA) is an artist, researcher and cultural practitioner with an interest in cultural diplomacy and intercultural exchange. She is the founder of Between the Seas Festival in New York City, a unique organization that presents and promotes contemporary performance from the Mediterranean and the MENA region in the US. As part of her work in the festival she has translated, presented and produced USA and world premieres from Greece, Lebanon, Algeria, Italy and more. She works regularly as a freelance director and producer for the theater and she is currently a Time Warner Fellow at the Women's Project Theater in New York. Aktina holds a BA in Communications (National University of Athens), a Diploma in Acting (National Theater of Greece) and a PhD in Drama (University of Toronto). She regularly writes articles and critical essays on contemporary theater and drama which have appeared in major conferences and publications worldwide. Aktina is a native of Greece and she currently lives in New York.



Ben Allen (USA) was elected as the top vote-getter in both his 2008 election and 2012 re-election; Ben Allen is a member of the Santa Monica-Malibu Board of Education and is the Board's immediate past President. Allen is an attorney with Richardson & Patel LLP, where his work focuses on government/political affairs and litigation. He is also adjunct faculty at UCLA Law School, where he teaches educational law and policy, serves on the executive board of the Los Angeles County School Trustees Association, is Vice Chair of L.A. County's Committee on School District Organization, and is a delegate to the California Democratic Convention. While in law school, Allen served as a voting member of the University of California's Board of Regents and as a judicial clerk with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Afterwards, Allen was a litigator with the law firm of Bryan Cave and then led the successful L.A. launch of The Spark Program, a non-profit organization that connects at-risk middle school students with apprenticeships. Prior to his law career, Allen worked for the National Democratic Institute, and then as Communications Director for Congressman Jose Serrano (D-NY). Allen has degrees from Harvard, Cambridge and Berkeley, and is fluent in Spanish.

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Marc Serena (Spain) is a freelance journalist based in Barcelona. He has been working in the most important Spanish media (TVC, RTVE, Catalonia Radio, Rac1, RNE, Avui, El Periódico de Cataluña) and several European media (Cafebabel, RTBF, Stradanove). He has covered multiple international events, as the latest Tunisian elections for the newspaper Público.

When he was twenty five he published “Trip to the 25” (2011), a snapshot of his generation that has been released in five languages including Chinese and Korean and named as one of the best travel books of 2011 by the Camino del Cid Award in Spain. His blog was awarded by Lonely Planet as the best non-English travel blog of 2009. During the same year, he was considered best Catalan blogger of the year.

He has travelled the African continent extensively and he has just published “Outing Africa” (2013), one the most comprehensive research so far about the LGBT community on the continent. He is currently co-directing a feature-length documentary shot in Cape Verde.

He has attended international events by the WHO Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health with the themes, “The future for our children” (Hungary, 2004) and the M100 Youth Media Workshop (Germany, 2012).



Matthew Oresman (USA) helps multi-national corporations and sovereign governments navigate complex, cross-border policy and trade matters, representing client interests before government entities in the United States, Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe. Oresman has significant complementary experience in international crisis management, and has worked on several high-profile matters of critical importance to corporate and sovereign clients. For example, in 2012, he managed international government and public relations for the Georgian Dream opposition coalition in its winning election campaign to take control of the Republic of Georgia’s parliament and government ministries. In 2011, he represented the Libyan National Transitional Council in its developing relationships with the U.S. government as it sought to oust the Qaddafi regime. Oresman also devotes significant time to pro bono work that leverages his international experience. In recent years, he has successfully lobbied to improve the way the United States combats HIV/AIDS around the world. Oresman earned his J.D at the Georgetown University Law Center and his B.A. at the University of Pennsylvania. He also studied at Tsinghua University and Fudan University in China.



Mualla Cirakli (Cyprus) currently works in the fields of foreign policy, democratization and human rights at the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments of the European Commission where she manages the EU’s election observation missions in fragile countries around the world.

Until 2012, Mualla served as the Head of the Brussels Office of the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce, which she set up in 2005. Liaising with EU institutions, NGOs and the public on national and European level, she voiced the values, interests and concerns of Turkish Cypriot people and the business community; with a view to further integrate them to the EU. In recognition of her achievements in this position, she was awarded the 2010 European Public Affairs Award as Rising Star of the Year.

Prior to joining the Chamber, Mualla worked at the Turkish Cypriot President’s Office as the Undersecretary’s Political Officer, closely dealing with the UN negotiations for the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. She also worked as a Trainer and Facilitator for the Cyprus Intercultural Training Initiative project funded by the UNDP to foster peace building, cooperation and trust between

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the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. Mualla has a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies with focus on Political Science and French from Hanover College, USA and an Advanced Master of Arts in European Studies from Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium. She speaks English, Turkish and French and has an intermediate knowledge of Spanish and Dutch.



Renee Black (Canada) is the founder of PeaceGeeks, a Canadian non-profit organization that helps grassroots non-profits to leverage web and mobile technology for promoting peace and human rights in developing and conflict-affected areas. Renee was inspired to start PeaceGeeks through her experiences connecting with grassroots groups working to advance peace and human rights, who often lacked basic tools to increase the visibility of the issues and strengthen their impact. She realized that skilled volunteers in areas like technology, design and communications, were passionate about contributing their skills and time to help these organizations to succeed, but didn't know where to get started. Their new open-source platform, Amani, will help partners to rapidly deploy new responsive websites, and collect and map critical issues affecting their communities. Renee previously worked as an IT Project Manager in the private sector, and later as a Policy Analyst for the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UN Women. She volunteered with Habitat for Humanity South Africa on their ICT strategy, and interned in Vanuatu to help bridge the digital divide between the developed and developing world. Renee holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Honors) from Dalhousie University (1999) and a Masters of Public and International Affairs (Honors) from the University of Ottawa (2009).



Steven Jacobs (USA) is a digital communications strategist who specializes in political campaigns and online fundraising and organizing. He is currently the Email Programs Director at Blue State Digital in New York City, where he consults for international political campaigns, public health non-profit organizations, and civil rights advocacy organizations. In this role, he has directed digital communications strategy for the presidential campaigns for President Francois Hollande of France and President Enrique Pena Nieto of Mexico, as well as for organizations as varied as Partners In Health and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Additionally, last year he served as Deputy Director of the Email Team on President Barack Obama's reelection campaign. Prior to his work in digital communications and organizing, Steve worked as a journalist, first as a web reporter for BusinessWeek's Paris Bureau, then as an investigative news producer at NY1 News, the New York City affiliate of CNN. He holds a bachelor's degree in the History and Literature of Britain and France from Harvard College and, as a result of the French student strikes of the spring of 2006, an as-of-yet incomplete master's degree in Cinema Studies from the Sorbonne.

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Wiebke Dalhoff (Germany) is a policy and project management professional with emphasis on advocacy for culture, education and development and with wide experience in global governance. The founder of *360° Advocacy*, she is an expert for literature and reading in the international arena. She provides consultancy services for civil society organisations and political institutions developing and implementing strategies and initiatives to strengthen the role of culture on the political development agendas. Working in close cooperation with the European institutions and the United Nations, especially with UNESCO, Wiebke is dedicated to facilitate and foster a dialogue about key issues such as literacy, freedom of expression and cultural diversity. Her recent work focuses on capacity building for teachers and librarians, promoting a culture of reading through community development and creative literacy training strategies. Prior, Wiebke worked for the *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)* in The Hague/Netherlands, the *International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisations (IFRRO)* in Brussels/Belgium and the *German Book Office* in New York/United States. Wiebke studied Culture and Media Management the Universities for Drama and Theatre in Hannover and Hamburg/Germany. She lives with her husband in Hannover/Germany.



Zulekha Nathoo (Canada) Zulekha Nathoo works as a television and radio journalist for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the country's public broadcaster and #1 News Network. She reports in Toronto on the top national and international stories of the day which have recently included the revolution in Egypt and the crisis in Syria. She also covers topics related to arts and culture. Zulekha started reporting in Fredericton, New Brunswick 10 years ago, doing her own camera work and digital editing. Since then, she has worked in Montreal, Calgary and spent a year reporting overseas in Nairobi with the Nation Media Group in 2008. She covered the devastating aftermath of post-election violence and corruption allegations. Before starting her journalism career, Zulekha spent a year working as a social auditor for Correctional Services Canada. She is fluent in French and currently learning Spanish and Hindi. Zulekha has also spent time in many of the world's most fascinating countries including Cambodia, Pakistan, South Africa, Egypt, and Turkey. She holds a B.A. in History from the University of Ottawa and a M.A. in Journalism from the University of Western Ontario. Zulekha does regular public speaking engagements and contributed a chapter to the 3rd edition of *Making It In High Heels*, a compilation of life stories by high-profile professionals designed to motivate young women to realize their potential.

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Virech Maugi (Portugal) is Financial Officer at Directorate General of Home Affairs - Ministry of Home Affairs for European Union General Program "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows" - Migration, Asylum and Borders which comprises the framework for improvement of management of migratory flows at the level of the European Union and to strengthen solidarity between Member States. Formerly Virech was a Policy Officer for International Cooperation, a position that has allowed him to gain experience in the Monitoring and implementation of international policy in the fields of sport and youth and to support international cooperation in the fields of sport and youth, with the Community of Portuguese-speaking countries, European Union and the Council of Europe. Virech is a Community activist and founder of several Community based NGO and youth empowerment initiatives. He also implements and monitors the workflow of the Ministerial Conference of Ministers of Youth and Sport of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries. Virech works to make sports a tool of Economic Diplomacy, and support to regional cross-border cooperation and projects.

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